DIG

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An interview with Jessica Alba

On the picket lines: the writer's strike investigated

Hottest Valentine's Day destinations in Long Beach

Editorials and reviews make debut

Linkin Park

After almost a three year absence, this Los Angeles group is back and trying to prove it's going to be around much longer than the nu-metal fad

Kate Nash David Coleman Matt Costa Ludo

February 2008

Editor's Letter

Hello everybody. Welcome back to campus. I hope you had a great winter break, I know I did.

When I first applied to be editor in chief of this publication last year, I was scared. I didn't have a hint of magazine experience, but I had a vision for this magazine and I think that's why the board brought me on.

Last semester we knew we had the potential to be a good publication, but we were still figuring things out. We struggled with design, identity, stories, deadlines and pretty much everything else imaginable, but we learned from it.

Now we are back, and I think the magazine looks the best it ever has. Stephanie Cary has worked her ass off to make this magazine look like a legit publication, and I think it finally does. We have national stories, a nice design and most importantly, an identity and a voice.

But our work is not done. *DIG* will keep growing and evolving all semester. We finally were able to debut our opinion pages and our review pages this month. I've always wanted to have those, but haven't had the space or the staff.

We had six new writers help out this issue, which was helpful with most of my staff at home. Adam Pringle was also a great help. Thanks Adam.

Members of multi-platinum, Grammy-winning rock band Linkin Park invited us to talk to them about their newest album, "Minutes to Midnight," and their upcoming tour for this issue. We also met up with Jessica Alba at the Four Seasons in Beverly Hills to talk about her new movie, "The Eye," which came out last Friday.

New writer Niki Payne and I went up to the picket lines to talk to members of the Writers Guild of America. It was really interesting to hear what they had to say, and to be right in the center of such a national news story.

We also tried to give this issue a little Valentine's Day touch. We have a Q&A with "the real-life Hitch," David Coleman, and Jen Moore wrote an extensive guide on some cool local places to take your Valentine.

This is the first Valentine's Day in awhile where I've had somebody to celebrate it with, and I'm looking forward to it. I love you Kyla.

Have a great semester everybody, and welcome to the new *DIG*. I hope you love it.

Matthew Wilkinson

Matthew Wilkinson
Editor in Chief

DIG

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Let the DIG Legend Live On. Don't Wait! Get involved in the publication this semester. Stop by SSPA 030.

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Dig Magazine is a publication of Dig & 49er Publications Board. Signed letters or e-mails are welcomed, appreciated and must include the authors name.

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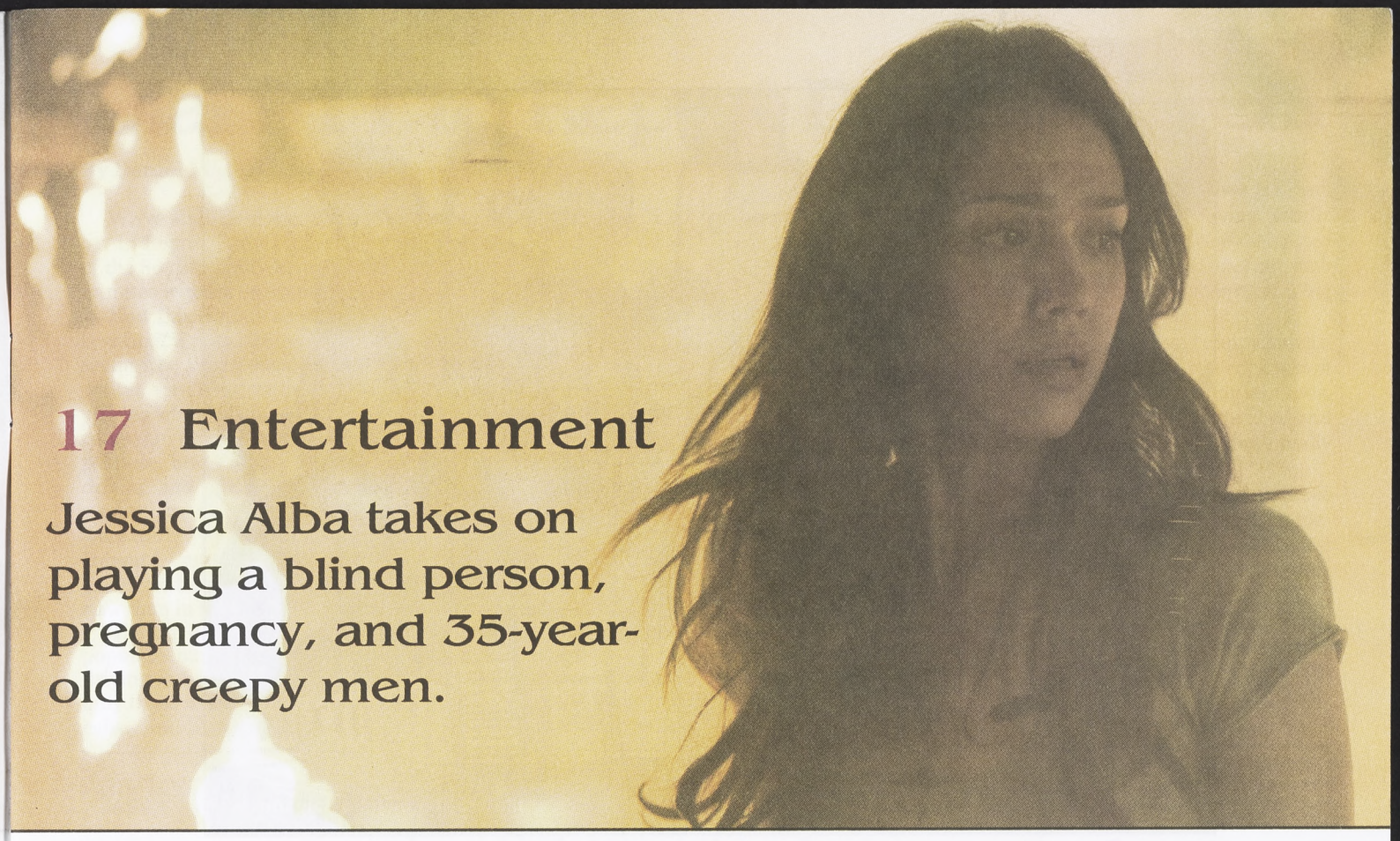


17 Entertainment

Jessica Alba takes on playing a blind person, pregnancy, and 35-year-old creepy men.

4 Opinion
Our writers voice their opinions on the necessity of "dial 911 for drunk driver" signs and the lack of entertainment on campus.

6 Q&A
The "Real life Hitch" David Coleman gives advice about dating.

8 Nightlife
With Valentine's Day quickly approaching, we break down Long Beach's hidden romantic gems.

10 Calendar
Your source for what's going down on and off campus for February

11 Music
Linkin Park discusses what it took to get its new album to the next level.

14 Investigative Report
On the picket lines and down to the truth, the writer's strike continues on.

16 Band Profile
Singer/songwriter Kate Nash talks about how MySpace boosted her career and how she's coping with her newfound fame.

20 Alumnus Profile
One graduate makes the jump from a kinesiology degree to "American Gladiators."

21 Travel
Hidden in the white wonderland of the Sierra Nevada, Trukee, Calif., makes for the perfect winter escape.

22 Reviews
See what's hot in music and movies for February.

Illustration by Julio Salgado

Lack of entertainment and music festival fuels commuter school image

By Dale Johnson

Bands play at Cal State Long Beach on a weekly basis. Every Wednesday, there is a stage set up below the Beach Walk (right below where Quiznos is) where bands play. Up-and-coming artists often take a stop off of their busy tour schedules to play the intimate confines of the Nugget.

Wait, who am I kidding? No band that has played our school in my time at CSULB is a group anybody has ever heard of.

And while we walk to class wondering who this no-name band is that is playing so loud that we need to turn our iPods up to max volume to block out the music, nearly every other major school in Southern California is treated to weekly concerts as well as an annual large scale music festival with—get this—real bands and artists playing them.

Don't get me wrong. I am all for exposure for up-and-coming artists, but that does not mean that smaller bands can't be balanced out by performances featuring music that is known by people other than the band members themselves.

One only has to travel down the 91 freeway to UC Riverside for a successful model of how to pull off a college music festival. On Feb. 23, UCR's second annual Heat Festival is taking place with a lineup full of great music. The concert will include live performances from 311, Mos Def, Circa Survive, Moby, Clipse, Girl Talk and many more across multiple stages.

With the amount of talent that is set to perform at UCR's festival, the $42.50 ticket price seems reasonable. But the real deal maker is that UCR students get in free. The cost is taken out of their student fees.

Schools like UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego and Cal State Fullerton have similar festivals with high-profile bands and artists, all at no cost to their students. UCSD's Sun God Festival has seen headliners such as Ludacris, My Chemical Romance, Busta Rymes, Gwen Stefani, Social Distortion and most recently T.I. UCSB's annual concert was headlined last year by Mickey Avalon and T.I.

Not only do we have a larger student body than most of these schools (nearly 20,000 more students than UCSB and 10,000 more than are enrolled at UCSD), the amount we pay in student fees is much higher than what any of these other schools pay, yet we don't see any benefit from our fees. UCSD students pay $21 for the Sun God Festival and other events throughout the year, and we pay $44 a year for our very limited amount of entertainment.

With more student fees and more students, why are we not seeing our money being put to a better use? The $44 we pay each semester is not an optional fee, yet we have little to no say in what our money is spent on. Lack of space is not an issue, with countless open spaces where a festival could take place, and The Pyramid would be a perfect venue for concerts if it were put to use.

Better use of our students fees would create a more tightly knit and enjoyable campus. Guest speakers, comedy shows, live music acts and other entertainment on campus would help make CSULB more than just a place where students go to class.

And try as the school may, it doesn't seem like the increased amount of coffee shops is doing much to help the school shake its commuter school label. CSULB needs to give students a valid reason to stay on campus, and weekly concerts by bands students actually know, particularly an annual festival of popular music, would not only create a reason for students to stick around campus but also provide opportunities to create relationships beyond standard classroom acquaintances.

A major step towards this would be a big-name music festival like the ones so many other college campuses around us have staged. With higher enrollment and more expensive student fees, this type of concert is seemingly feasible. If students begin to demand a similar musical festival, maybe we can finally get a piece of the entertainment pie that so many other colleges in our area are already enjoying. DIG

Dial 911 to Report Drunk Drivers

By Daniel Macri

We've all seen them: Those electronic displays that read, "Dial 911 to Report Drunk Drivers," which appear to be located on all of the Southern California freeways. It seems like you can't go 10 minutes without encountering one.

Now this doesn't sound like a bad idea because drunk driving is wrong. It puts innocent lives at risk, so anything to counter that seems like a great idea, right?

But aren't we putting our own lives at risk by using our cell phones while driving? Is the "Dial 911 to Report Drunk Drivers" campaign promoting cell phone use in cars? It may be for a good purpose, but still, it's not the greatest thing in the world to be driving and talking on the phone at the same time. After all, 2,600 deaths and 330,000 injuries per year in the United States were caused by cell-phone usage according to a 2002 study by the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis. And that number has likely increased because there are more cell phones and cars on the road now than in 2002.

The big question is, will these electronic displays continue to populate our freeways after non-hands-free mobile-use while driving is banned effective July 1? It's ridiculous to think that only those with a hands-free mobile device are able to make such calls. And if an exception is made, that would contradict the law banning cell phones.

The other big question is, how do you know if a driver is drunk or not? Sure, you can see the tell-tale signs of swerving, erratic braking and acceleration. But what if something else distracted the driver for a split second? It could be something innocent such as the driver's dad patting him or her on the shoulder after a big promotion.

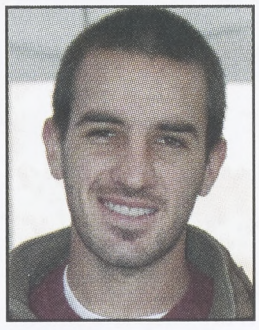
Your mistaken judgment could easily ruin their happy spirits. If pulled over, they are in a messy situation with the cops where they may have to prove their innocence by embarrassing methods, such as a sobriety test or a breathalyzer. It sounds far fetched and even ridiculous, sure, but what I'm saying is that you don't really know who is drunk and who is not.

There is an easy solution to all this, though, replacing all those electronic displays dealing with drunk drivers with more traffic-related messages like showing the amount of time or distance it takes to get to a particular destination, or warning of an upcoming traffic jam.

During the daytime in everyday life, traffic is a bigger issue than drunk drivers. So electronic displays showing you the time it takes to get from place to another, which is especially important with Californians who are always on the go, just makes a whole lot more sense. DIG

Can you DIG it? What do you think about the call 911 for drunk driver signs?

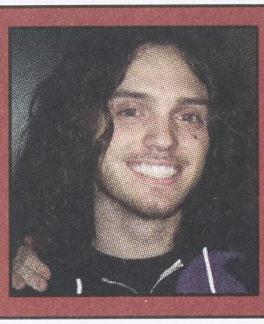
Stacy Ferrell
Communicative Disorders
"I think drunk drivers are stupid, so I think the signs are smart. You might as well call, it can't hurt."



Jeff Long
Interior and Architectural Design
"They are good in theory, but I don't think anyone is going to actually dial 911. I'm not going to dial 911 if I see someone swerving on the road, probably because I'm lazy."

Heather Keith
Textile Design and Fashion Merchandising
"I probably wouldn't call, who am I to judge if someone is impaired?"

Daniel Oum
Graphic Design
"I think they are a good idea. Last time I saw a drunk driver I was about to call, they were sleepy as hell. I didn't do it though because I had to make a turn."



The Cab

Alex DeLeon, Singer

"I've never called. I would call in, but I don't think people in general care enough to call."

Advice from the "Dating Doctor"

By Daniela Gutierrez

Photo by Daniela Gutierrez

David Coleman

"The sooner you get physical with someone, the less likely it's love, especially for us guys."

With Valentine's Day right around the corner, who better to ask for love advice than David Coleman? Coleman is an expert in giving college students love tips. For more than 10 years he has been traveling the country giving speeches to confused lovers and shy daters. The 2005 Will Smith film "Hitch" is even based on Coleman's career. *DIG* caught up with Coleman to find out what tips he had for this upcoming Valentine's Day and how to improve your love life.

Q: **College students are one of your main audiences. Why do you target this group?**

A: *They are in the perfect age to learn things and put them into action the next day. A lot of students will hear what I have to say today and they'll act differently tomorrow. They'll make better decisions, and they'll live happier lives. They will ask someone out that they always wanted to ask out. They'll break up horrible relationships. People do listen usually to what I have to say.*

Q: **There are a lot of students who date their high school sweethearts in college. What is your advice on those kind of relationships? How is the interaction affected due to the change in conditions?**

A: *I know a lot of people don't like this, but I don't think high school relationships should last into college. It's a whole different world. When you go to college you should be free and open to do and meet whoever you want to meet. You should feel comfortable to make friends and date, without having to worry about jealousy, especially if you are in a long distance relationship. Long distance relationships are brutal. People put themselves through unnecessary misery and they wonder why their relationships don't work out. You hear high school sweethearts saying that they are going to go to the same college. But even then, rarely do they make it thoughout college as a couple.*

Q: **What about the transition from college into the real professional world?**

A: *It depends on where they are going. If you are getting a job here in California and your boyfriend is going to Manhattan, is it going to work? No. Not over time. You might be able to pull it off for a little while, but will it work really well for a long period of time? No.*

Q: **In conclusion, you think one of the main issues in relationships is long distance?**

A: *One of the No. 1 reasons why college relationships fail is long distance relationships. Way up there. Another one is people mistaking infatuation with love. When they first meet each other they are really excited with that person, but truly they are not in love with them. They might be in lust with them, or some people are in love with the notion of being in love but not in love with that person. A lot of couples will stay together out of obligation, a lot. They don't really care about the other person anymore, but they keep dating them because they feel obligated.*

Q: **How can we differentiate between true love and lust?**

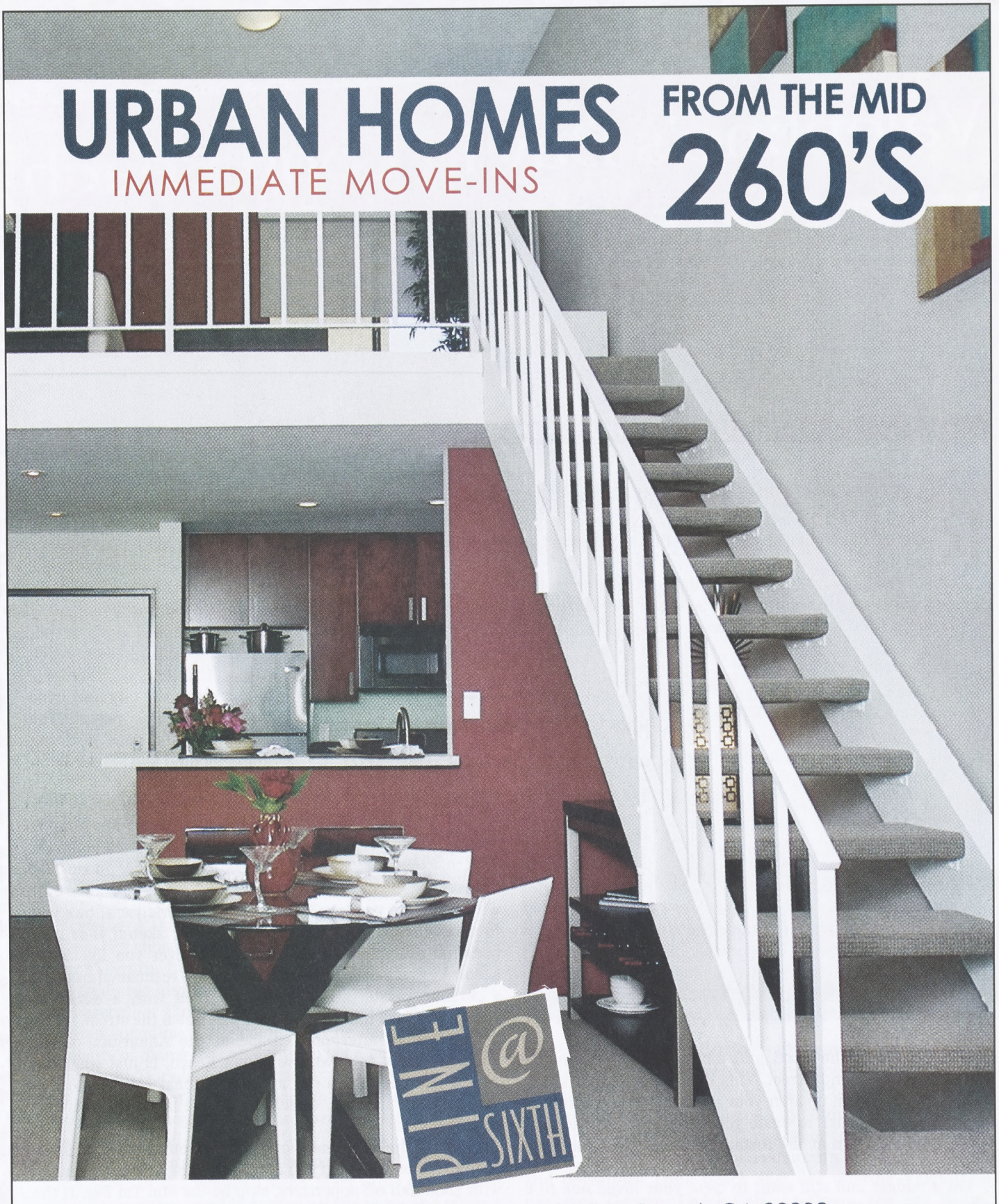
A: *The sooner you get physical with someone, the less likely it's love, especially for us guys. If a guy is really into a woman, he might be into a guy too, but if he is into a woman, he will not want to sleep with her quickly because she is the real deal. He won't want to screw it up. He won't want to treat her like he is treating everybody else. So it's really different.*

Q: **Finally, what would you recommend to our students to make this Valentine's Day unforgettable?**

A: *You should give your gift a day earlier on the 13th, instead of the 14th. Do it with a handwritten note that says: "No one as special as you should have to wait another day."* DIG

URBAN HOMES
IMMEDIATE MOVE-INS

FROM THE MID 260'S



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Valentine's Day in Long Beach

Valentine's Day is quickly approaching and reservations are going fast. Need a good last-minute idea of where to take your sweetheart? Check out our guide to the best destinations that Long Beach has to offer.

By Jen Moore

Roses are red, violets are blue. Valentine's Day is coming up; I'm ready, are you? Before you start to fret, read on.

Consider this your one-stop guide to the most anticipated day for couples nationwide, with ideas even St. Valentine, the patron saint of lovers, would be envious of. Fortunately for Long Beach residents, we have a city that is full of fun and romantic spots to make this day extra special without all the stress. So belly up to the bar, all you romantics, as I serve up exactly what this city has to offer.

> "Valentine's Day seems like a holiday for women to get spoiled with chocolates and flowers, but men deserve just as much in return."

The first stop on this tour is a romantic treasure tucked away in Belmont Shore. Long Beach offers a little taste of Italy in its backyard with a traditional gondola ride that cruises through the beautiful Naples Island as you cozy up to your special valentine. This somewhat hidden tradition has been a part of Long Beach since 1982 and business continues to grow. Feb. 14 is just around the corner, so reservations are a must. Check out www.gondolagetawayinc.com to book a ride.

Once you've set the mood, grab a bite to eat at Dominico's Ristorante on Second Street. This quaint restaurant is the perfect spot to warm up after your ride, and their traditional Italian cuisine is sure to tickle your taste buds. If the wait is bit long, sit down at the restaurant's checker table for a friendly game.

On a budget and still want to treat your loved one to a memorable night? Head over to the Long Beach Museum of Art located right off Ocean Boulevard. Not only does this museum offer an aristocratic evening complete with modern art and breathtaking views of the Long Beach coast, but its connecting restaurant is serving up a special Valentine's Day feast with prices that will keep your wallets smiling, along with the impressive student discount it offers. Call ahead for reservations.

Remember, there is no rule stating that you have to celebrate on Feb. 14. As Valentine's falls on a Thursday this year, some people might not be able to make the late night plans. The lines and crowds might be too much to handle. Rent a movie and wait until Friday because daVinci Ristorante (located near the Long Beach Airport) offers a helicopter tour around the city and wine tasting for $50 per person! The restaurant also has amazing food prepared and served by an exceptional staff.

Feel like harnessing your inner artist? Color Me Mine is a little spot on Second Street where you are able to do just that, and why not share it with someone you love? This unique experience allows you to choose from over 300 ceramic pieces, sketch your own personal design and then paint it however you like for a keepsake that will last a lifetime. Once you're finished creating a ceramic masterpiece, reward yourself with a decadent yogurt treat at Pinkberry, located just down the street.

Perhaps an afternoon escape at the Aquarium of the Pacific, located in downtown Long Beach, is just what the two of you need for a fun and educational getaway that is student price friendly. Check out all the latest exhibits and petting pool.

After all the excitement of walking around the aquarium, go grab some dinner. If you are looking for a relaxing lounge with good half off appetizers, stop by the Mai Tai Bar. If the aquarium has you craving seafood, check out Gladstone's, which offers a fun atmosphere and good prices. A special Valentine's menu will also be prepared and will leave you smiling. Both places are located at the Pike right near the aquarium.

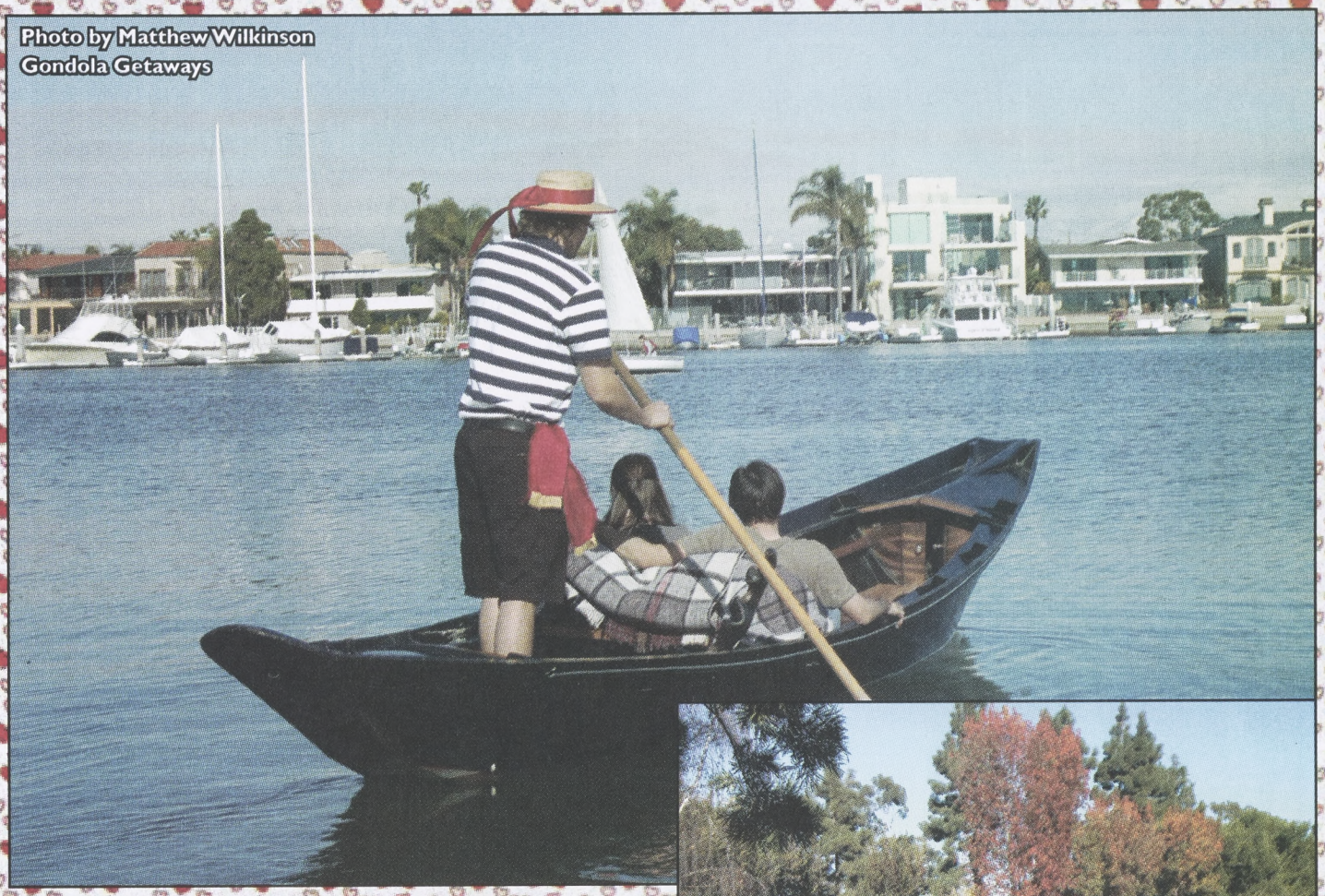


Photo by Matthew Wilkinson
Gondola Getaways

School and classes, especially at the beginning of the semester, can leave you stressed, so if you have little time to plan, Cal State Long Beach has a romantic spot that is educational and cultural. The Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden is the perfect place to take that special person without denting the wallet. The vast garden and scenic water pond make this place an enchanting utopia. The serene beauty of CSULB's very own garden is guaranteed to put you in botanical bliss.

Valentine's Day seems like a holiday for women to get spoiled with chocolates and flowers, but men deserve just as much in return. If you girls are having trouble figuring out what to do for him just keep reading. Does he like to golf, play baseball or shoot hoops? Nothing is more attractive or fun than spending a day doing what he likes. Long Beach has plenty of places for couples to go get a physical workout together. El Dorado Golf Course is right down the street from school and is a perfect place to hit some golf balls or head down the peninsula to the open basketball courts to play a quick game.

Want to get a scare without the scary movie? Long Beach is the home of the famous Queen Mary. This once-fastest cruise liner in the world is docked off the ports and offers a range of activities. Check out the "Ghost of Legends" tour, which is a half-hour of frights and stories about haunted mysteries.

After all the screams, stop on by the "Star Trek" exhibit featured in the dome. It is only in town for a short time, so tour it while you can. All of the walking and touring will work up an appetite, so book reservations at one of the two award-winning restaurants, Sir Winston's or Chelsea.

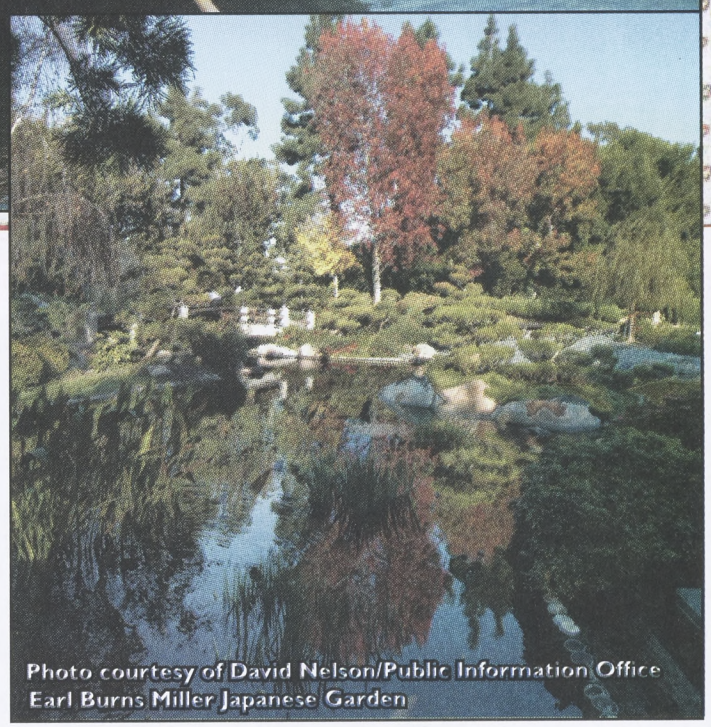
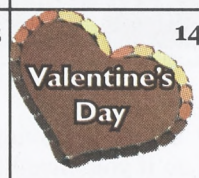


Photo courtesy of David Nelson/Public Information Office
Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden

Long Beach is an amazing city with plenty of options to do on Valentine's Day. If you want to enjoy a romantic dinner, there are plenty of restaurants on Second Street and downtown Long Beach that are offering Valentine's packages. Georges Greek Café, La Opera, the Sky Room, 555 Steakhouse and Sevilla are just are few restaurants that have a unique vibe and wonderful food. Whether you feel like spending big bucks on the upcoming holiday or enjoying a quiet evening, remember that the memories will last a lifetime. DIG

February

Your guide to concerts, on campus events and local happenings

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
The Matches			30	31	1 Men's Ice Hockey vs. LMU,@ Glacial Gardens, 9:15 p.m. Men's Volleyball vs. USC,@ The Pyramid, 7 p.m.	2 Men's Basketball vs. UCI,@ The Pyramid, 7.pm. Women's Tennis vs. LSU,@ Campus Courts, 1:30 p.m.
Velvet Revolver		5 Sherwood & The Matches, @ Chain Reaction, 7:30 p.m., $13	6 Velvet Revolver, @ The Wiltern, 8 p.m., $85.50/$38.50 Wyclef Jean, @ HOB Anaheim, 8 p.m., $32.50/$30.50	7 Women's Basketball vs. UC Davis, @ The Pyramid, 7 p.m. James Blunt, @ The Wiltern, 8 p.m., $42.50/$29.50	8 Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, @ Carpenter Center, @ 8 p.m., $45 Scary Kids Scaring Kids, @ The Glass House, 6 p.m., $17	9 Women's Basketball vs. Pacific, @ The Pyramid, 7 p.m. Angel City Outcasts & Whiskey Rebels, @ LA Knitting Factory, $10
10	11 Mika, @ The Wiltern, 8 p.m., $29.50	12 Jill Scott, @ Grove of Anaheim, 8:30 p.m., $71/$51	13 Men's Basketball vs. UC Riverside, @ The Walter Pyramid, 7 p.m. Fabulous, @ HOB Anaheim, 8 p.m., $37.50/$32.50	14  Valentine's Day Cartel, @ Chain Reaction, 7:30 p.m., $16	15 Cobra Starship, @ The Glass House, 6 p.m., $12 G. Love & The Special Sauce, @ HOB Sunset, 9 p.m., $20	16 Women's Basketball vs. CS Bakersfield, @ The Pyramid, 7 p.m. Hal Holbrook in "Mark Twain Tonight," @ The Carpenter Center, 8 p.m., $45
17 Bob Marley Reggae Festival 16th-17th, @ Long Beach Convention Center, 1 p.m., $55/$39 Women's Water Polo vs. UCLA, @ Campus Pool, 12 p.m.	18 Presidents' Day (Campus Open)	19 Iron Maiden, @ The Forum, 8 p.m., $67/$37 The Hives, @ The Wiltern, 8 p.m., $22.50	20 Men's Basketball vs. CS Northridge, @ The Pyramid, 7 p.m.	21 Third Day, @ HOB Anaheim, 6:30 p.m., $32.50	22 Baseball vs. Rice, @ Blair Field, 6:30 p.m. Marilyn Manson, @ The Wiltern, 9 p.m., $49.50	23 Baseball vs. Rice, @ Blair Field, 2 p.m. 311/ Mos Def/ Circa Survive & More, @ UCR Commons Lawn, 7 p.m., $42.50
24 Baseball vs. Rice, @ Blair Field, 1 p.m. U.S. Bombs, @ LA Knitting Factory, 7:30 p.m., $15	25 Bless The Fall, @ Chain Reaction, 7:30 p.m., $12 All That Remains, @ HOB Sunset, 7 p.m., $17/$14.50	26 Baseball vs. Univ. San Diego, @ Blair Field, 6:30 p.m. Women's Softball vs. St. John's, @ Softball Complex, time TBA	27 Women's Softball vs. Florida, @ Softball Complex, 2 p.m. AP Take Action Tour w/ Every Time I Die, @ HOB Sunset, 7 p.m., $20/$18	28 Women's Basketball vs. UCI, @ Walter Pyramid, 7 p.m. Tilly and The Wall, @ The Glass House, 7 p.m., $13	29 Baseball vs. Wichita State, @ Blair Field, 6:30 p.m. Throwdown, @ The Glass House, 7 p.m., $16 Bad Religion, @ HOB Anaheim, 8 p.m., $22.50	Bad Religion

Linkin Park

Getting away from rap/rock

Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Records

With their third full-length studio album, the members of Linkin Park wanted to push themselves to the limit. With a big-name producer and lots of time on their hands, the group did everything it could to get away from the nu-metal label and prove it's not part of just another fad.

By Matthew Wilkinson

For most modern rock bands, disappearing from the music scene for three years would be career suicide. But for Los Angeles-based sextet Linkin Park, three years was how long the group needed to write its third full-length studio album, "Minutes to Midnight."

"We were really hungry to make a record," Linkin Park front man Chester Bennington told *DIG* on a press phone conference late last month. "Once we got ready to make the record, we were very ready to make a record. When we started talking about producers, we knew in our hearts that we wanted to make a record that was going to be a turning point for us and kind of revamping the band creatively and intellectually and all that kind of stuff."

For most of the music-listening world, Linkin Park is a band that needs no introduction. After coming up through the festival circuit in late 2000, the group's debut album, "Hybrid Theory," became the best-selling album of 2001. It was soon followed up by 2003's "Meteora," which debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* charts. Between those two records, the band had eight "Hot 100" singles in the United States and more than 20 million record sold.

But the thing Linkin Park is most known for is its touring. In 2001, the band played live shows 324 days out of the year. It toured with high-profile festivals like Ozzfest and Family Values Tour, touring with the hottest nu-metal artists around like Korn, Papa Roach and Limp Bizkit. But even on the road with some of the hottest bands in music, Linkin Park struggled to find its identity.

Photo by Matthew Wilkinson

"We never felt like we belonged in that nu-metal, rap-rock category," said group emcee, guitarist and keyboardist Mike Shindoa. "Obviously if you look back on 'Hybrid Theory' there was rap and there was rock in it, but it just felt like a lazy category that people were putting that name on us because they couldn't come up with anything that was better or they just kind of felt like lumping everybody together because they were kind of the same. But from our perspective, there were more differences than there were similarities."

So after the band took a three year break from the music scene (emerging only to play a benefit show for Tsunami victims in 2005, play at the Live 8 benefit with Jay-Z and perform with Paul McCartney and Jay-Z at the 2006 Grammys) it decided it wanted to do something so different that it would never be lumped in with those lazy labels again.

Enter producer Rick Rubin, the man behind Red Hot Chili Peppers' "Blood Sugar Sex Magik," Johnny Cash's "Unchained" and System of a Down's "Toxicity," a man known for pushing bands to their limits.

"Rick Rubin is a master of revamping bands," Bennington said, "And he kind of has a similar philosophy to producing music that we have in making music, which is he produces music kind of based on personal taste. We write music based on our personal taste. We got together. Rick was very vocal about if he was going to work with us that he didn't want to make a record with us that sounded like 'Hybrid Theory' or 'Meteora.' He wanted to kind of push us to our most creative potential and see what we could do."

Inspired by Rubin's enthusiasm, the members of Linkin Park went back and wrote more than 100 songs for the new album. Some stuff sounded like Public Enemy, some stuff sounded like '80s R&B pop songs and some stuff sounded like it belonged on the "Mulan" soundtrack, but the band kept scrapping and writing

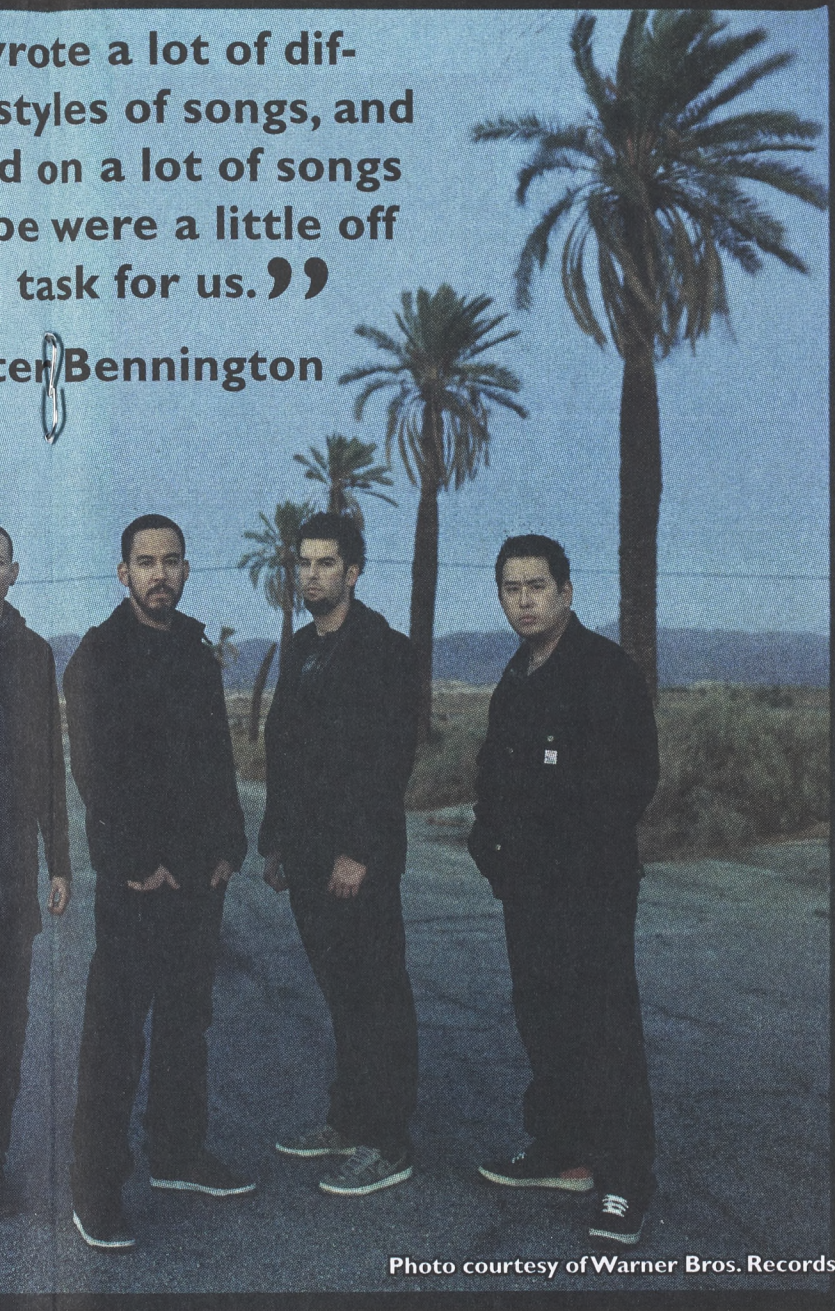


Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Records

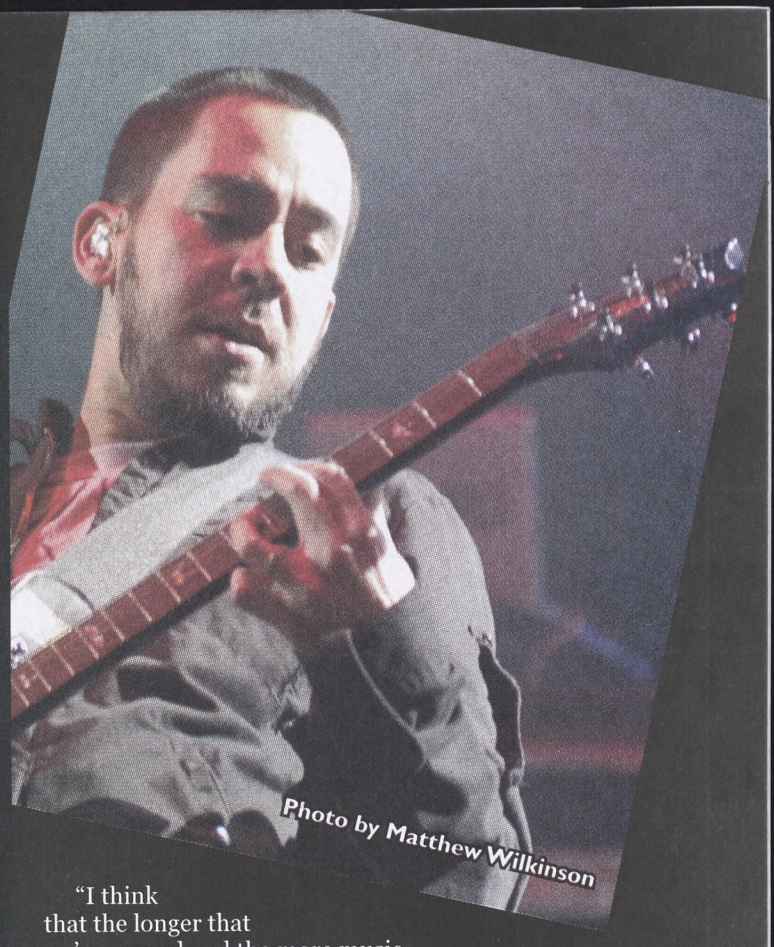


Photo by Matthew Wilkinson

new stuff.

"I think the most important part of the writing process of 'Minutes to Midnight,' in my eyes, was really the fact that we kind of opened our minds up to writing music that just felt right," Bennington said. "We went more towards how the songs themselves made us feel and how we responded to them rather than what we thought we should create, what we thought our fans would want us to make. In doing that, we wrote a lot of different styles of songs, and we worked on a lot of songs that maybe were a little off the task for us."

The band members recorded for almost a year at Rubin's mansion in L.A. They narrowed the hundreds of demos down to 12 songs. The album was released in mid-May to mixed reviews. "Minutes to Midnight" was definitely not rap/rock, but a lot of people really didn't know what to call it. More than half the album was mellow rock, there was little-to-no rapping from Shinoda, it didn't sound like the same band.

But the fans still bought the album in droves. Despite the differences, the highly-anticipated album debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* charts and was the highest debuting album of 2007 to date.

"I think
that the longer that
we're around and the more music
that we make, more people kind of realize that
we're not just this band that's going to kind of disappear or be part of a specific trend or a fad," Bennington said. "That's what happened when we got put into that circle of nu-metal. Our response has always been, 'we're not that.' We write music that we want to hear, and if that means putting a jungle beat with a saxophone is what we want to hear, then we're going to write that."

After selling out amphitheatres over the summer with My Chemical Romance, Taking Back Sunday, HIM and Placebo on the band's own Projekt Revolution Tour, Linkin Park will be hitting the road again this month on a headlining spring tour. Warped Tour veterans Coheed and Cambria and Chiodos will be in support.

"When we choose groups to tour with, we really look at a lot of different things, but mostly we look at the quality of the band," Bennington said. "We feel that good music speaks for itself, and I don't know about you guys, but if I go to the concert and every band sounds the same, it's kind of makes for a really long day. So we do like to keep things fresh and keep things moving, and play with acts we haven't played before."

For the first time ever, the band gets to play prestigious arenas Madison Square Garden in New York and Staples Center in L.A. Tickets for those shows have sold so well that the band will play to 360 degrees in the round. Bennington and Shinoda were amused because that means DJ Joe Hahn will actually have to wear pants.

"You usually can't see him from the waist down," Shinoda said.

"It's been great to see the kind of things that Joe does on stage from our perspective because you might actually get to watch him take a nap onstage sometimes," Bennington added. "He lays down and takes a nap. And he always wears a cool shirt, but then he's got like workout shorts and flip-flops on. It's kind of like one of those things where the news anchor isn't wearing any pants under the desk kind of thing. That could be pretty special for some really lucky people." DIG

They walk the line

WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA ON STRIKE
AMPTP GOAL: UNION BUSTING
WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA ON STRIKE
WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA ON STRIKE
WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA ON STRIKE

The WGA has been striking for months now, but why? *DIG* went up to the picket lines to ask what's going on and when is the strike going to end?

By Niki Payne

It is day 74 of the writer's strike that has plagued America's television and film industry, yet the members of the Writers Guild of America show no signs of slowing down.

"We're writers – united – we'll never be divided!" the striking writers chant in unison outside the Alhambra, Calif. set of the upcoming film "The Goods: The Don Ready Story," starring Jeremy Piven and co-produced by Will Ferrell.

Almost 50 writers trickle in, a majority of them proudly sporting their red or gray "Writers Guild of America" T-shirts as they chat amongst each other. Phil, the strike leader, called for everybody to gather around for a briefing on the day's activities.

"We believe this is a very effective way to put pressure on the companies, to show a presence out in the community," he told the crowd through his megaphone.

A "location picket" is when strikers go out to a location where a film is currently filming and do their best to disrupt the production. They scream and chant and get local traffic to honk their horns. It makes it almost impossible to film, especially if filming outdoors. Today, Piven and company appear to be filming indoors.

"They knew we were coming," said Alfredo Barrios Jr., another strike leader.

The main issue at hand for these striking writers is in regards to the use of new media, like streaming television episodes over the Internet and movies and digital episodes for download on iTunes. Writers are currently not getting paid anything for media streamed or downloaded via the Web.

The studios offered writers their current home video rate for new media, but writers believe that pay formula needs to be updated.

When home video was still fresh on the scene back in the 1980s, the studios proposed a percentage cut of the writers' residuals by 80 percent, to which the writers agreed in their eagerness to expand the market, leaving only 20 percent to be distributed among the writers, the directors, the producers and the labor and crafts union.

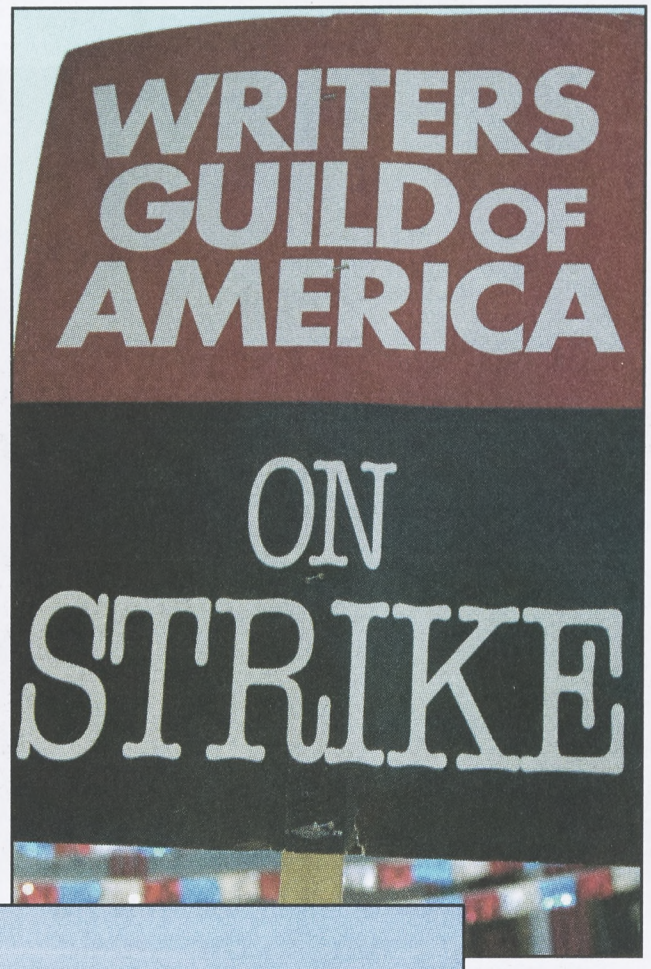
"When we made that deal we allowed a certain freedom to the companies to do the right thing," said Bob, a writer striking in front of Warner Bros. Studios in Burbank who withheld his last name. "Ultimately, 20 years later, we are still paid on the same residual formula that we were then. Now we are looking at a whole, brand new type of media, the Internet, and we don't want to happen this time around, what happened then."

Back then, the writers were under the impression that once the home video market became healthy and stable, they would be paid for what they lost out on and their residuals would increase again. Two decades later, however, DVD has taken over VHS home video, and has become extremely successful in sales. But still, the rate has not increased. A team of writers gets roughly 4 cents for every DVD set sold.

And now that there is a new platform for delivering entertainment, the Internet, the guild feels it is time to re-evaluate the original pay formula, which accounted for production, manufacturing, storage and shipping costs. With the Web, there are no packaging, storing or shipping costs.

"There are usually about 10 writers working on a show,

> "There are usually about 10 writers working on a show, We all share 4 cents. We are asking for 8 cents."
>
> -Steve Skrovan, writer



Photos by Matthew Wilkinson

said Steve Skrovan, a writer from television's "'Til Death" and "Everybody Loves Raymond," in front of CBS Radford Studios in Studio City. "We all share 4 cents. We are asking for 8 cents."

To fully comprehend the position of the writers, it is important to understand the position of the studios. Today, there are about six corporations that own all mass media in the United States, and together they form the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP). Though they share one voice, they speak on two different platforms.

Take the popular show "CSI." The CEO of CBS listed 11 different ways the show would capitalize on new media, estimating about $2 billion in profit for that show alone. Disney reported the use of the Internet would rake in even more money from their shows. NBC even showed investors a model projecting $195 million in new media revenue for the hit show "Heroes" alone.

Yet when it comes to the writers, these conglomerates are singing a whole different tune. While they tell shareholders the Internet is a cash cow for television, they tell the writer's guild that they are uncertain if they can make any money in new media.

Former Disney CEO Michael Eisner claimed that corporations have been in a "harlot's parade" over the past few years by hyping up the potential for digital revenue without having anything to actually show for it. He claims that writers are striking for "a piece of a nonexistent [revenue] flow."

So who are the media giants lying to? The stockholders who invest in their companies? Or the writers who create the television and movie content that the stockholders are investing in?

As expressed by the Writers Guild of America (WGA) in a slideshow presentation on YouTube, "misleading the people who create your product is bad business" and "misleading investors is a federal crime."

The networks are telling shareholders and investors that they are making a lot of money. Between digital streaming and downloading, they are expected to bring in $4.6 billion over the next three years.

Based on the fact that misleading investors is punishable by law, it is assumed the conglomerates are lying to the writers, which is why the WGA will not budge on their demands.

There is more to this strike than just the writers, though. This strike has become about all Hollywood unions. The strike has caused so much disruption, not only in viewers' TV schedules, but also by halting productions and increasing studio layoffs. Crew members of these productions are losing their jobs because of a fight that's not theirs. Or is it?

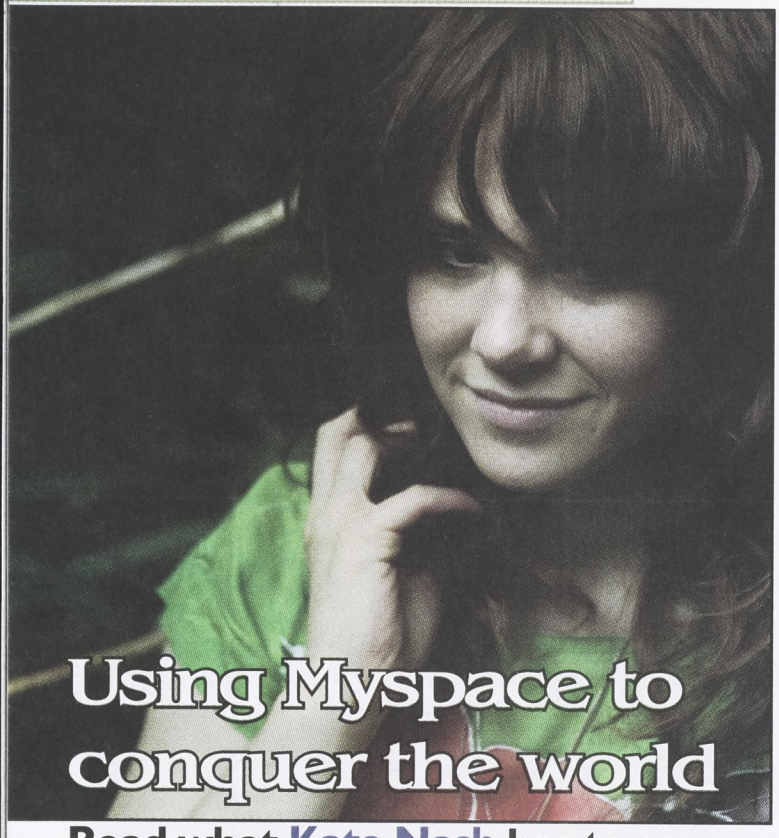
"In Hollywood, when one guild gets a deal, the other guilds get a similar deal. It's called pattern bargaining," said Seth Kurland, a writer for "Friends" and "8 Simple Rules."

The outcome of the writer's strike also directly affects the future of crew members, who get paid residuals as a union and not individually. These residuals fund their health care and pension plans.

So if the writers aren't getting paid for streamlined works from the Internet, that means no money in residuals for all labor and crafts unions. With the way technology seems to be progressing, more people may be watching movies and television shows via the Web rather than on TV. If this happens, union members risk losing their health insurance and pension plans.

However, if the writers can negotiate a fair deal with the alliance, the other unions will get a fair deal, too, as stated in their contracts. It is speculated that perhaps this is the reason the conglomerates don't want to dish out the dough. If they can negotiate a deal with the WGA, it means they have to give residuals to all the other Hollywood unions as well.

"Hey, hey, ho, ho. Corporate greed has got to go," chanted the striking writers in Alhambra. "No guts. No glory. No writer. No story."



Using Myspace to conquer the world

Read what Kate Nash has to say about being young in the music industry, avoiding the paparazzi and her advice to all you amateur songwriters out there.

By Ariana Castellanos

Who said MySpace was a waste of time? Whoever it was probably hasn't heard about Kate Nash, the young Londoner who has developed an international fan base through the social networking site.

At the age of 20, Nash started out with a few demos on her MySpace page and less than a year later went platinum in the United Kingdom. Her debut album, "Made of Bricks," was released in the United States early last month.

"It's really mad, to be honest," Nash said about being so young and in the music industry. "I think you go through different phases of just being like 'Oh, let's just enjoy it. It's a laugh.' And then sometimes it just is a bit overwhelming and weird. But it's all about keeping your feet on the ground and keeping your friends and family around you, and just enjoying it."

Nash broke her foot when she accidentally fell down a flight of stairs. Bedridden, she had ample time to work on her music and made a life-changing decision to save herself from "another year of rubbish jobs." She started to book a few gigs and uploaded her tracks onto her music profile on MySpace.

Nash made friends with another Londoner musician, Lily Allen, and Allen liked Nash's music so much that she put her in her "top friends." When Allen made it big, Nash got exposure, too, possibly because of their similar styles.

Both Allen and Nash have storytelling lyrics and a very dry sense of humor. Lots of reviewers compare the two, but vocal-wise, Nash compares better to singer and songwriter Regina Spektor.

MTV showed a lot of faith in Nash when they made her their "featured artist of the week" in early January. During commercials and after every show, they would show videos of Nash performing acoustically. While anybody flipping channels would have seen her, Nash never saw the spots, and wouldn't have wanted to.

"I haven't seen them, probably because I don't go looking for them," Nash said. "I just don't really buy papers or stuff I'm in anymore. I used to because I thought it was fun and I found it exciting, but I don't really read any of my press anymore because it—it's weird and you do get sick of it. And you're always frustrated because no one ever really represents you fully. They can't. You're a human being and you're not a page."

Even in the U.K., where tabloids find everybody, Nash managed to stay away.

"I've made a conscious decision to stay out of them," Nash said. "I was really worried about that. I was really worried you'd have no control, but you totally have control. If you want to be in the tabloids, you'll be in the tabloids. I don't hang out with only other famous people because I hang out with my friends and my boyfriend and my family and my dogs."

"Made of Bricks" is an intimate, yet confrontational album that gives listeners a fresh dose of contemporary pop. It uses samples, piano and woodwinds to help expose Nash's fears and romantic problems. Most of the songs draw from Nash's own life experiences.

"'Merry Happy' does mean quite a lot to me as a song because it was about something that went wrong and didn't work out and you get left by someone you don't think you're ever going to get left by," Nash said. "I think the song's about being independent and being alone and being happy with it and being OK with it because at first it's really weird and really sad and really horrible, but then I basically trained myself to be able to be alone."

Nash illustrates independence and the guts it takes to move on after having your heart broken. Near the end of the song, she repeats the line "I can be alone, yeah. I can watch the sunset on my own." A sunset is the ideal romantic setting for a couple, and in the end she has proven she's reached a point where she feels OK to do even the romantic things on her own.

While Nash keeps touring the world and growing up, she's proof that anybody out there with the desire to write music and an Internet connection can make it big.

"Just concentrate on all your writing and your songs," Nash advised. "Figure out who you want to be and how you want to be portrayed and what you want to represent, and be more than just about music. Have something else. Be more than just your music." DIG

Photos courtesy of Geffen Records

Jessica Alba

An eye for an eye

By Matthew Wilkinson

Actress Jessica Alba has been very busy lately. With "The Ten," "Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer," "Good Luck Chuck," "Bill" and "Awake" under her belt in just the last year, "The Eye" is her last project before she settles down for a while. Read what she had to say about her latest film, being pregnant and creepy 35-year-old men.

Photos courtesy of Lionsgate

Most guys, and maybe girls, probably have a fantasy of what they think Jessica Alba is really like. Is she the funny, dorky girl that we saw in last year's "Good Luck Chuck," or she is the hardcore badass we saw in television's "Dark Angel?" The truth is, she's a little of both.

Alba, who has become one of the biggest sex symbols of our generation by topping almost every "hot list" and "sexy celebrity" list in the last couple of years, is funny, sarcastic and can seem a little dorky at times, but she is also drawn to very strong, female roles, has a favorite serial killer and takes her acting very seriously.

For her role in the supernatural thriller "The Eye," which was released last weekend, Alba took on the challenge of portraying Sidney, a blind concert violinist who receives a cornea transplant so she can see again. But something is wrong with these new eyes. She sees things that aren't really there, and sees a strange reflection in the mirror.

Q: **Did you see the original Chinese version of "The Eye?"**

A: *I did. I saw it around the same time I read the script. I wanted to see the tone and the difference between the two. I enjoyed it. I thought the main character was quite stoic and I really enjoyed her performance. The main difference between their version and our version is that their version is very much an Eastern culture approach to ghosts. It's not so farfetched for ghosts to be part of people's consciousness, versus in Western culture where people think ghosts and anything of the paranormal is crazy and you're nuts and there's no way. It wasn't so outlandish in the first film.*

Q: **What kind of research did you do on being blind?**

A: *I followed a young girl named Jessica, oddly enough, who is a vocalist. She's been blind since she was two. She's in a master's program at Boston University in classical music. She's lived in Italy, England, travels in planes, taxis, subways and goes around different cities by herself. She's completely blind and totally self-sufficient, independent and speaks three different languages. I wanted my character to embody that strength. I also went to a blind orientation center here in L.A. and one in New Mexico. I learned how to read Braille and walk with a cane and all that stuff.*

Q: **Was it harder to play blind or pretend you could play the violin?**

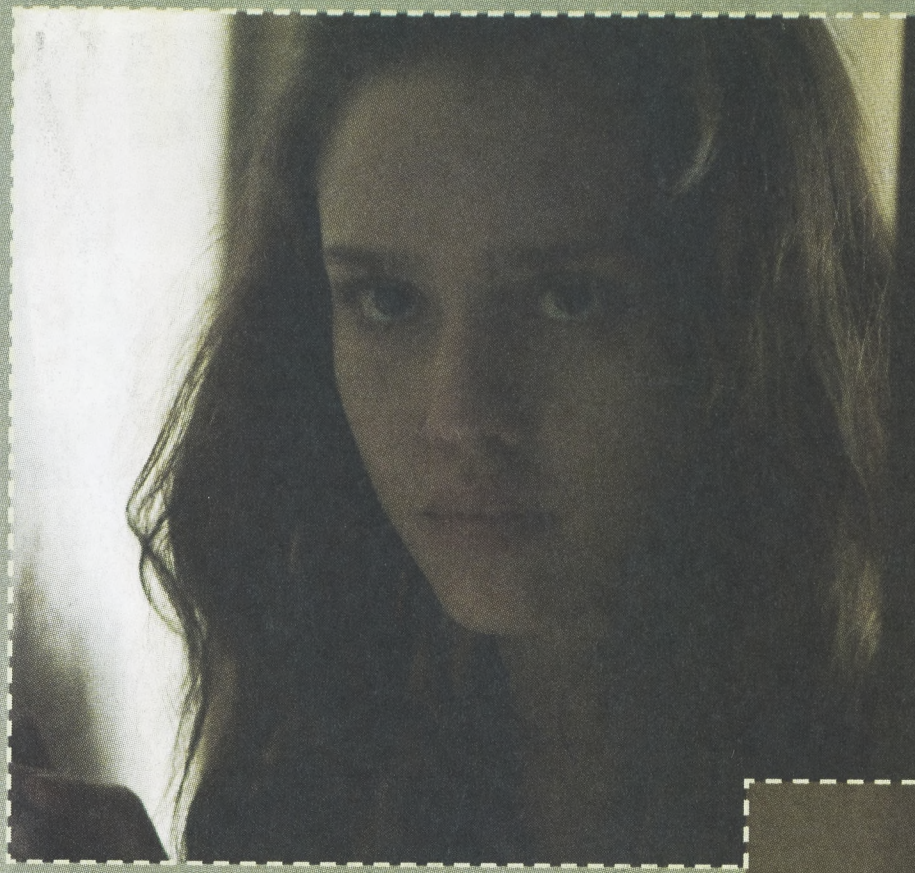
A: *The violin was definitely more challenging because it's such a beautiful instrument, and to be a soloist you have to be pretty phenomenal. From your posture to the way you hold the bow and the violin and play the notes, everything is quite specific. People who play the violin in orchestras and are accomplished musicians still practice eight to 10 hours a day. The people who play at the Disney Concert Hall still practice eight to 10 hours a day and they've been doing it since they were three.*

Q: **How often did you get to practice?**

A: *Basically during filming "Fantastic Four" and during this, about six months. I practiced every day during lunch, every break I had, when I got home. I had three different violin teachers. I haven't seen the movie completed with the music and stuff. I hope it looks like I'm playing [laughs]. The vibrato was hard.*

Q: **Did you keep the violin and rock out at home now?**

A: *Yeah, right [laughs]. When I played my dogs would try to run away from me, or try to cover their ears. It was so horrible. I was like, "I'm sorry." I do still have one at home, though. I can play "Happy Birthday." I did play everything in*



> "It's amazing because you can't believe that you have something inside of you that's growing. It's life. It's the most incredible thing in the world, but at the same time it's very emotional and bizarre."
>
> - Jessica Alba

the movie, it just sounded terrible.

Q: **Was it hard to react to things that were added in during post-production, like the ghosts and the mirror reflection and stuff?**

A: *Well, the mirror reflection they actually did with her there, so that was pretty crazy. I didn't know the first couple times we did it that they told the actress to basically mimic every move I was making. It was trippy having someone who looks kind of similar and to move and do everything. I would touch my nose and she would touch her nose. There was one take where I cried out of one of my eyes, and she cried out of the same eye. It was so creepy. The ghosts were there, too. The final makeup wasn't done, but we had a guy who was virtually nude and bald and was really, really thin and was wearing makeup and shaking. He looked pretty creepy. But I saw a version of what was going to be there, so that made it easier to react.*

Q: **When are you going to start working on "Sin City 2"?**

A: *I know nothing about it. I haven't seen a script or anything. I hear more about it from press than anything. I haven't heard anything from the producers. I've talked to Robert [Rodriguez, director] and Frank [Miller, "Sin City" creator] and they haven't really mentioned it. Of course I would like to do it, though. It's a lot of fun.*

Q: **What about a "Fantastic Four 3"?**

A: *Yeah. I totally would. But a lot of things, to be honest, are on hold because of the writers' strike.*

Q: **Have you been out there to the lines at all?**

A: *I haven't, but I haven't crossed any either.*

Q: **How are you enjoying being pregnant? Have you felt a good physical change?**

A: *I don't know if good comes to mind [laughs]. It's crazy.*

It's amazing because you can't believe that you have something inside of you that's growing. It's life. It's the most incredible thing in the world, but at the same time it's very emotional and bizarre. Something else is taking over and you really got to just surrender to it and let it do what it needs to do.

Q: **Having played a superhero, how do little children react? Do they really think you're a superhero?**

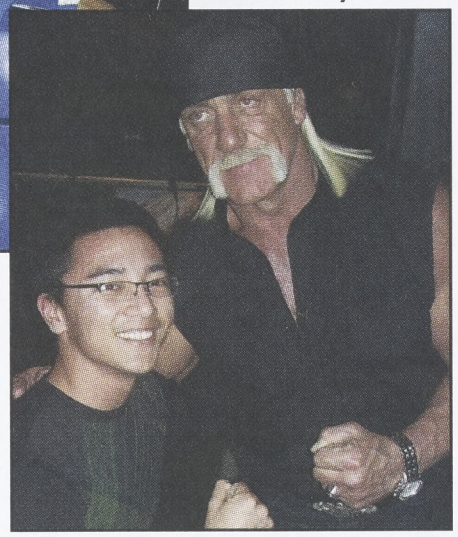
A: *A few of them ask me to go invisible, and I just tell them I can't do it without my suit on. That's the good answer, because there is no way I'm putting that suit on unless I'm on set [laughs]. It's very sweet. Especially the little boys and girls when they're like, "Oh my God, it's Susan Storm!"*

Q: **Is it less sweet when it's 35-year-old men wanting you to put the suit on?**

A: *[Laughs] Yeah. They usually first have me take pictures with their kids, and then go, "One for me, one for me." And then they get really close, and I'm like, "uhhhhhh...."* DIC

Watch out for the spider monkey

CSULB alumnus Molivann Duy might not be the biggest contender on NBC's "American Gladiators," but he beat out the competition on the series premiere episodes, and now has a chance to become the next gladiator.



Photos courtesy of Molivann Duy

By Jessica Iavazzi

When you think of an American Gladiator, the image that probably comes to mind is a ripped guy with a fake tan who looks like a bodybuilder. Molivann Duy, a 24-year-old Lakewood native, doesn't fit that bill, but it didn't stop him from taking on Justice, Militia, Mayhem, Titan, Toa and Wolf on NBC's re-launch of the popular competition show "American Gladiators."

At 5 feet 7 inches and 155 pounds, Duy, known as "Moli" to his friends, was one of the smallest guys on the show, but he used his size and speed as an advantage to beat out the bulky gladiators.

"Titan was a four-time Mr. Universe and he benches 600 [pounds] right now," Duy said. "That's like five times my weight!"

Duy graduated with a degree in kinesiology from Cal State Long Beach last December. While in his last semester, his friends talked him into trying out for the show. Duy, who has been an active person as long as he can remember, just "went along for the ride" to tryouts at Gold's Gym in Venice Beach last September.

"I play a lot of sports, I work out and I do all this acrobatic stuff," Duy said. "I always did breakdancing and I can do running back flips."

After acing his pull-ups, karaoke test, 40-meter dash and video interview, Duy received a call back from the producers of "The Amazing Race" and "Survivor" two weeks later to participate in the next round of interviews.

"After that second interview, a week later they called me back for training in Culver City with Nitro [a former American Gladiator from the original show], who was our coach," Duy explained.

The training sessions were held over a two-week period in the "American Gladiators" studio and consisted of about 30 participants, both male and female, who were watched by producers while practicing the events, such as the joust and the gauntlet, before making the final decision of who would be contenders on the show.

After training sessions ended, Duy was unsure if he wanted to participate in the show for safety and time concerns, but was persuaded by the producers. He was one of 24 chosen out of more than 10,000 applicants. The long process of production began right afterward.

Duy became known as the energetic contender who was described by the show's host Hulk Hogan as "having more energy than he did." Duy called himself a "spider monkey," which he took from the Will Ferrell movie "Talladega Nights."

"The first two events I was taking it seriously like the other contenders, thinking, 'I got to win and I got to give it 110 percent,' but then I realized I was out there to have fun, so that's when the 'spider monkey' came out," Duy said. "They were taking it too seriously. This is not the Olympics, it's 'American Gladiators'!"

His energetic personality made him a crowd favorite, and Duy tried to hype up the crowd any chance he could. Duy explained that despite his energetic personality during the events, he was tired, too.

"Don't get me wrong, it's hard!" said Duy, who became a winner after finishing the final course in two minutes and 13 seconds. "I thought I was in good shape before the Eliminator, but that really killed me."

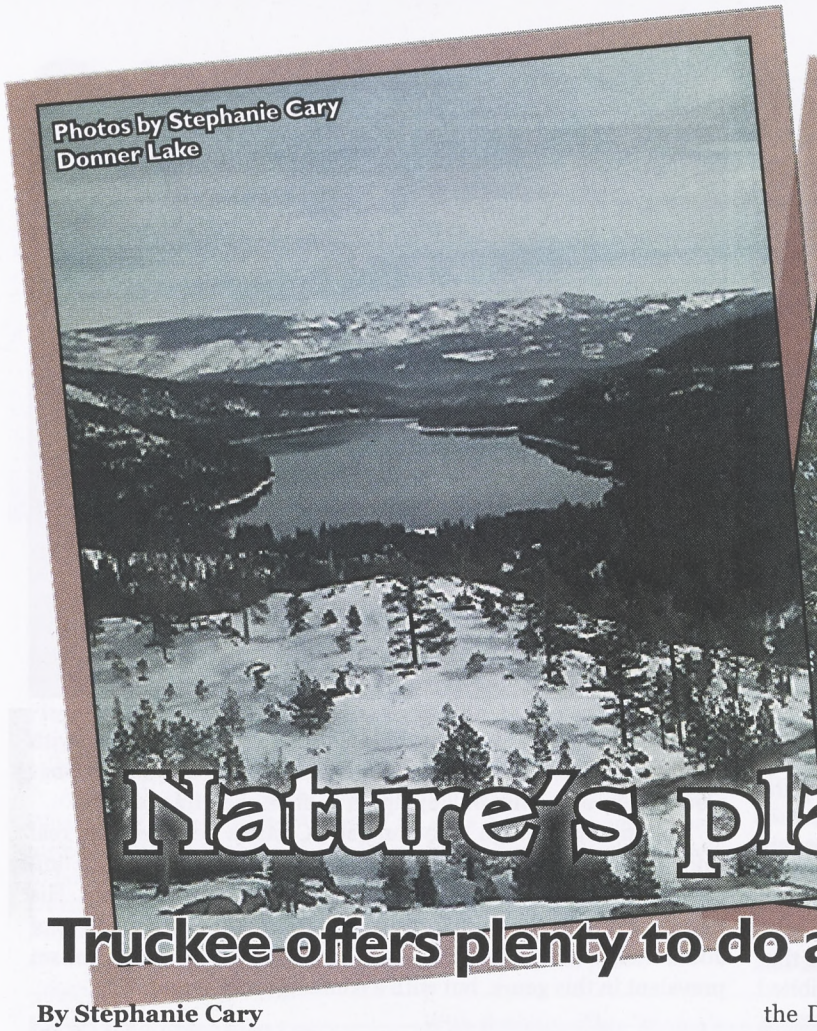
Duy dedicated his win to his high school friend who passed away in December 2006, saying he felt like his friend was his guardian angel throughout the show because he never got injured

Duy's time put him in a position to be a part of the final eight contenders who would move on to the semi-finals and finals for a chance to win $100,000, a 2008 Toyota Sequoia and the opportunity to become an American Gladiator next season. The results will be airing sometime this month.

Now Duy is focusing on becoming a personal trainer, and he has even become a local celebrity thanks to the show.

"People look at me a little bit longer now," he said. Duy has been approached everywhere from the bank to the gym and even at a pub while he was out with some friends, and he thinks being a contender on "American Gladiators" will help him in his training career.

"I'm just glad people saw me for who I am," said Duy. "I went out there to have fun and that's what I did."



Photos by Stephanie Cary
Donner Lake

Monument dedicated to the Donner Party at Donner Memoiral State Park

Nature's playground

Truckee offers plenty to do and even more to learn

By Stephanie Cary

Sitting around a table in the living room, I was dominating my parents in a game of Scrabble. It was our third or fourth game, and I was the reigning champion.

As we played by the dim lighting of every flashlight and candle we could find in the house, we were trying to pass the time during our second night snowed in with no power or heat.

When we finally emerged from the house the next day, the snow levels had rose six feet and the sun was trying to peek through the heavy blanket of dark gray clouds.

Despite what seemed like the two longest days of my life, spending the break in Truckee, Calif., was the perfect white Christmas I had been hoping for throughout finals – relaxing, entertaining, beautiful and refreshing.

Tucked away in the Sierra Nevada, Truckee is a prime spot for recreational opportunities such as hiking, water sports, winter sports, camping and shopping. And its rich history makes these opportunities even more alluring.

A popular hiking area is the original Emigrant Trail that settlers heading West used during the 1840s and 1850s. In fact, by taking the Spanish Trail you can hike from Truckee all the way down to Southern California.

Another popular spot for hiking and rock climbing is Donner Summit, an area where a section of the transcontinental railroad still remains. The hike to the railroad site is a short steep climb over boulders, but it's well worth the effort.

Walking by the railroad, which was built in 1868, you can see the original Chinese writing on the bricks of the trestle, and throughout the hike there is a beautiful view of Donner Lake.

Not only is Donner Lake where people enjoy fishing, boating, swimming and ice skating, but it is also the location of one of the most famous historical events of the pioneer age.

Donner Lake and Donner Memorial State Park are named after the Donner Party, a group of pioneers who became stranded in the area for months while migrating to California from Illinois in 1846.

Donner Memorial State Park has 140 campsites and 60 picnic areas along with its hiking trails, and it meets up with part of Donner Lake for easy access to swimming, fishing and boating.

It is also the home of the Emigrant Trail Museum, which has information about the area's historic adventures and is open year-round.

And if you are not the camping type, Truckee has many other lodging options, including bed-and-breakfasts, hotels and cabin rentals.

At an elevation of 5,980 feet, Truckee is probably best known for its winter sport opportunities.

There are seven ski resorts in North Lake Tahoe alone, including Sugar Bowl, Northstar, Boreal and Squaw Valley, which was home to the 1960 Winter Olympics.

A quick drive in any direction during the winter and you will find a place to go snowboarding, skiing or sledding, or you can just build a snowman.

But the main attribute of Truckee that gives it charm is the historic strip of Downtown Truckee, which is a hot spot for shopping, dining and nightlife.

With its rustic atmosphere and fantastic food, O.B's Pub and Restaurant is a popular place for dining. And with many different shops to spend hours wandering through, you will definitely work up an appetite.

The area has been a victim of several fires over the decades, but throughout the rebuilds it has remained the heart of Truckee since 1863.

Only 14 miles from North Lake Tahoe, Truckee is nature's playground full of recreational opportunities ready to be seized.

But during your playtime, make sure you take a minute to sit back and enjoy the beauty and solitude of this mountain community.

Matt Costa live at Fingerprints

By Valerie Servin

Indie folk singer Matt Costa received a warm homecoming as he arrived at the Long Beach record shop Fingerprints on Jan. 22. The Huntington Beach native celebrated the release of his new album, "Unfamiliar Faces," in the small, neighborhood music shop off Second Street. Fans stood nearly all around the building in frosty weather to witness a special in-store performance by Costa and his band.

Costa made his way to the stage a quarter passed eight to antsy fans screaming his name.

"There's lots of love in the air," he responded with a smile.

At first he seemed a bit dazed, but he soon began having fun and digging the crowd. He opened up with an acoustic piece from his first album before moving onto "Lilacs" off "Unfamiliar Faces." Costa amused the crowd by forgetting the first verse to the song, but got back on track without skipping a beat.

While his music is overall mellow and joyous, he picked up the pace with the toe-tapping "Cigarette Eyes" that's reminiscent of Blur's "Coffee and TV." The crowd wasn't too animated though, until the keys of "Mr. Pitiful" came pounding through the speakers that drove a scruffy blonde-haired fan to get up on stage and mouth the words to the harmonious thumping.

It's almost impossible for Costa to create a melancholy song that doesn't have a glimpse of optimism and sweetness. He exhibited this by strapping on his classic blue Gibson guitar and starting with "Unfamiliar Faces," which led to the beautifully sweet "Vienna," that would make any sense of longing turn into a cheerful memory.

Holding up through a 10-song set, Costa is definitely the real thing. His talent as a songwriter has evolved since his last album, creating a sophisticated set of songs about the simplest things. His newest album pushes him forward into folk rock – with the likes of Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan – with his youthfulness and optimism prevalent in this genre, but with a contemporary sound. DIG

CD Reviews

Artist: Ludo
Album: "You're Awful, I Love You" (Island Records)
Release date: February 26

By Dale Johnson

Only half of Ludo's new record, "You're Awful, I Love You," rings true to me.

While the band certainly isn't awful, love is a strong word.

Combining the indie-rock smartass tendencies of Say Anything with the pop styling and electro elements of acts like Hellogoodbye, the St. Louis-based band creates a sound that seems to be a power-pop lover's dream come true.

Well, it almost does.

There are two sides to Ludo on this record. One side of the band combines some severely clever lyrics with varied song structure that keeps the record unpredictable. When Ludo decides to pick up the pace, the music flourishes. The faster songs see the majority of the witty lyrics that Andrew Volpe spews over the innovative use of electronic sounds and intricate guitars.

Unfortunately, another Ludo surfaces from time to time. This alter ego of the band writes much more stripped down and slower songs. The lyrics take a back seat to pure emotion, and Ludo falls somewhat flat with this styling. These slower songs become repetitious and move at a slug's pace (that's right above a snail).

Still, most of the record is damn catchy, you can't take that away from it. Volpe's lyrics are intelligent as well as poignant and aren't the norm on pop records.

Overall, Ludo creates a sound that is a smorgasbord of the different styles in pop music. While the band doesn't succeed in creating a sound that is unique, the record's catchy hooks and sing-a-long qualities make for a solid effort. DIG

Artist: Secondhand Serenade
Album: "A Twist in My Story" (Glassnote/East West Records)
Release Date: February 19

By Jessica Iavazzi

Nearly a year after the official studio re-release of one-man acoustic rock band Secondhand Serenade's debut album "Awake," John Vesely is back to broadcast his raw talent accompanied by a full band.

In Vesely's follow-up, "A Twist in My Story," he uses orchestration and more instruments, in contrast to using only his acoustic guitar ,to showcase his growth as an artist and takes his trademark emotional ballads to the next level.

The 11-track album mixes songs that incorporate the full band, like "Stranger" and "Suppose," as well as bare tracks with like "Why," "Goodbye" and "A Twist in My Story."

The album also includes a fresh take on two songs that were on "Awake" – "Maybe" is transformed into an up-tempo song and "Your Call" is slowed down to focus more on Vesely's refined vocals. The standout track on "A Twist in My Story" is the first single, "Fall For You," which features Vesely on the piano and has a video circulating MTV's airwaves.

Secondhand Serenade's follow-up album is the perfect combination of sounds from Vesely's self-produced tracks to songs with advanced production. "A Twist in My Story" still contains the common element that makes Secondhand Serenade's fans swoon – his honest lyrics about life and love. This is just another chapter in Vesely's story. DIG

Gallows rock Chain Reaction

By Adam Pringle

Anaheim's beloved Chain Reaction was the target of a British invasion on Jan. 21, but moptops and Merseybeat-inspired music were nowhere to be found on this evening. Instead, Gallows had arrived.

The quintet demonstrated how it has been able to convince folks across the pond that punk still matters (its single "Staring At the Rude Bois" recently hit No. 1 on the U.K. Rock Chart) by putting on an intense and sweat-drenched set perfect for an intimate setting like Chain.

While guitarists Laurent Barnard and Steph Carter busted out raw-yet-forceful riffs reminiscent of what the Sex Pistols would have played if they survived into the early '80s and began listening to a lot of Black Flag (indeed, Gallows covered the Black Flag classic "Nervous Breakdown" late in the evening), singer Frank Carter got to the task of bringing the City That Disney Built to its knees.

Although the skinny, boyish-looking redhead resembles Ron Weasley of "Harry Potter" fame if he ever decided to get himself tattooed and go the way of hardcore, he yet again proved himself to be a formidable front man by whipping the crowd into a frenzy. During blistering numbers such as "Abandon Ship" and "Kill the Rhythm," Carter transfixed everyone by swinging his microphone around and jumping into the audience to start mosh pits.

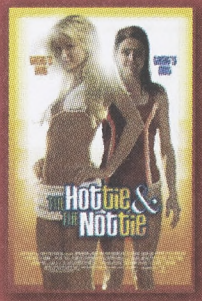
Photo courtesy of Epitaph Records

Carter also had some choice words for Disney (who canceled Gallows' gig opening for Social Distortion at the House of Blues Anaheim the following evening due to the lyrical content of "Orchestra of Wolves," the title track from the band's 2006 album), calling on the audience to pelt Downtown Disney with eggs while commenting that he would "shove Donald Duck's eggs up Minnie Mouse's ass."

Appropriately, Gallows capped off the evening with the venom-fueled "Orchestra of Wolves," proving that the uncompromising and non-conformist spirit of punk is alive and well. DIG

Movie Reviews

Film: "Hottie and the Nottie"
Stars: Paris Hilton, Joel Moore, Christine Lakin
Release Date: February 8



By Kyla Broderick

"A life without orgasms is like a world without flowers."

This quote, said by star Paris Hilton, sets the mood for her new comedic film, "The Hottie and the Nottie."

The storyline gets a little absurd, but it's a cute tale about a guy named Nate (Joel Moore) who, when his girlfriend leaves him, goes on an adventure to find the girl he had a crush on in elementary school.

With the help of his "mama's boy" friend, he tracks down the girl, Cristabelle (Hilton). However, there is a catch: Hilton's character, the "hottie," will not date anybody until her best friend June (Christine Lakin), the "nottie," does.

Nate goes on a quest to find someone to date June despite her unattractive appearance. As the movie continues, more unrealistic situations take place. All these men are randomly proposing to Cristabelle, not to mention the albino stalker who is after her (hence the restraining order).

Regardless of the movie being humorous, there is a sense of reality included as Nate starts to fall for June, yet this doesn't occur until June starts to become a hottie herself. This leaves one to believe that he only cares about her looks and not her personality.

Overall, the film is funny, yet caters to the shallow world we live in. What if an "ugly" person sees this film? How will they feel? You may laugh at this film, but may also be offended. Hilton's lack of acting ability might offend you as well. DIG

Movie: "The Eye"
Stars: Jessica Alba, Alessandro Nivola
Release date: February 1

By Matthew Wilkinson

With remakes of Asian movies taking over our horror/thriller genre at the box office, it's easy to assume that "The Eye" is just another mediocre revamp. Surprisingly, it's not. But it's not amazing either.

The movie starts out with Sydney (Jessica Alba), a blind concert violinist preparing for cornea implants. With the implants Sydney will be able to see for the first time since a firecracker accident when she was a little kid.

But once the new eyes are in, Sydney starts to see things. At first she starts seeing people that aren't there, then she starts seeing death's "escorts" following people around, and then she starts imagining whole situations. Every time she goes to sleep, she sees the same vision of people dying in a fire.

So Sydney goes to an eye specialist, Dr. Paul Faulkner (Alessandro Nivola), to seek help. He tells her about a phenomenon called "cellular memory," where people who get implants show characteristics of the donor. Sydney needs to figure out who her donor is and what she wants her to see, before it kills her.

The movie is much more a thriller than a horror movie. There are lots of scary visions and loud noises to make you jump, but it's definitely not a bloody or gory movie.

Alba does a respectable job of playing a blind person, and her reactions to the scary visions and people look authentic. Nivola's character is quite bland though, and the movie could have been just the same without him.

While it's not likely to win any awards or become a cult favorite, "The Eye" is a decent thriller that will make your date jump into your arms. DIG

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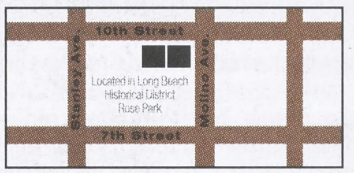

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